



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

December 20, 2007

Reply To
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 06-007-AFS

Ken Post
Alaska Regional Office
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628

Dear Mr. Post:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Helicopter Access to Conduct Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) in Wilderness (CEQ No.20070478). The review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA's written comments on the original Draft EIS (June 2006) included a rating of LO (Lack of Objections). Based on our review of the final EIS, we commend the Forest Service for a thorough and thoughtful analysis and for adding a section on subsistence. The Final EIS identifies Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative which we believe is more protective than the proposed action (Alternative 4) in the Draft EIS. According to the final EIS, Alternative 1 does not involve helicopter landing access, compared to Alternative 4 which entailed helicopter landings that would temporarily flatten vegetation and would present a risk of introducing non-native species.

EPA has no objections to the action as proposed and commends the Forest Service for their choice of an alternative that would be of lesser impact to the wilderness character of the Tongass and the Chugach National Forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this final EIS. If you have questions or comments, please contact Fatima Bukhari at (907) 271-1481 or by electronic mail at bukhari.fatima@epa.gov, or myself at (206) 553-1601.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit